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ABSTRACT

This booklet (one of a series of 10 booklets in a reading project to benefit Kosair Children's Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky) contains 10 stories especially written for fifth graders by educators. The stories are about: chronic and life-threatening diseases and children's feelings about them; accidents with guns and accident prevention; a visit to an emergency room; children's reactions to drug use/alcoholism in the family; and similar topics. Students read the stories in the booklet and answer comprehension questions, and pledges are made by parents and friends for each question answered. The stories or story topics may be used in the classroom for instructional purposes and are intended to help integrate the language arts, social studies, health, and creative arts. (SR)

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What is it?

It is an educational project designed to benefit KOSAIR Children's Hospital. Students at each grade level (K-8) read ten stories and answer comprehension questions. Pledges are made by parents and friends for each question answered.

What are these stories about?

The stories are about: diseases; accidents; accident prevention; children's reactions to hospital stays; dealing with personal differences; etc. For older children, the topics of alcohol and drug abuse are also included. Many of these stories highlight personal triumphs.

Who reads these stories?

Any child whose teacher and parent(s) support the project.

Can children receive help with reading and answering questions?

Yes. Parents are encouraged to help their child (regardless of reading ability) read and answer the questions.

How much instructional time will this take?

Very little. Teachers simply take a child's word for his participation and record the money returned. Upon completion of the program, the teacher completes a brief checklist for any prizes earned.

BENEFITS

Reading/Writing Experience

These stories are interesting and educationally sound at each grade level. The questions following each selection are based on a new questioning strategy. Children will be actively engaged in the reading/writing process.

Philanthropy

Children learn to be helping members of society as they raise money for less fortunate children.

Parental Involvement/Interaction

Children will have the opportunity to discuss with parents ideas and concerns that may never have been brought out without the questions following these stories.

Integration of Subjects

Teachers may use stories or story topics in the classroom for instructional purposes. Teachers will be provided with motivational and educational strategies to accompany these stories. These ideas help integrate the language arts, social studies, health, and creative arts. Many are based on whole language ideas, and higher level thinking skills are encouraged.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

All children will receive an achievement certificate signifying their participation in the program. Children who collect $10 or more in pledges will receive prizes for their accomplishments. Best of all, children will gain a sense of pride as they help other children.

For more information, you may write of call: Susan Ramp Ridout, Ph.D.
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Kosair Children's Hospital's

READATHON

KIDS HELPING KIDS

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STORIES WRITTEN BY EDUCATORS FROM INDIANA AND KENTUCKY

A LETTER TO THE PARENT
ABOUT THIS BOOK AND YOUR CHILD

This booklet contains stories especially written for children of your child's age. They have all been written by educators. Many of them tell of the fears and feelings these educators had when they were children. Some of them are written through the eyes of a parent.

The stories deal with topics which are sometimes difficult for us to think or talk about. Yet, these very topics are the ones which our children most desperately need to have an adult share with them. Some of the stories may make you and your child cry or feel sad. Others will lift your spirits in memorable ways. Hopefully, one or two will cause you to say, "I had those same feelings."

It is our sincere hope you will use these stories as starters for a special time of sharing with your child.

No one knows your child better than you do. Therefore, we encourage you to preview the stories before your child reads them or you read them to your child. Some stories may be best read with your child. It is, of course, your right and responsibility to exclude any story which you may feel is beyond your child's present level of maturity.

At the end of each story are questions to be answered. At your discretion, your child may either write or discuss the answers with a responsible adult. Questions which are well suited for discussion are marked with asterisks (*). Questions answered in either form may be counted toward your child's fund raising efforts for the children of Kosair.

These booklets are in their first printing. If you have suggestions or comments which would improve their effectiveness in helping future readers, please call or write to:

Susan J. Gibbs
Director of Annual Giving and Special Events
Children's Hospital Foundation
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The Blue Bottle

Bruce Kulwicki
Corydon Elementary

Jeff spent most of his time alone at the beach. He enjoyed collecting the odd things that washed up on the shore each day. Every time he went, Jeff took an old potato sack and nearly filled it with interesting items. He had a wide collection of starfish, sand dollars, and colorful shells. If he found anything exciting, it went into the old potato sack. But today Jeff didn't have a potato sack. He used a wooden basket that he had brought from home. He thought that the basket had once held apples, but he was not quite sure.

In about two hours, the basket was completely full, and Jeff was having trouble carrying it. Today's hunt was more successful than usual. His most valuable find was a dark blue bottle that had a cork in it. The cork looked too big for the bottle and was very dry. Jeff could tell that it had not washed ashore that morning.

After he carried the heavy basket back to where his family was, Jeff started building sand castles. After each castle was built, he jumped up and down on it. Later, he let his little sister bury him in the sand. After that he had to go swimming to get all the sand off his body. On the way home Jeff noticed he had a bad sunburn. His mother gave him a lecture about wearing sunscreen, but he slept through most of her talk. He was tired.

Later that night, Jeff looked through his basket of beach treasures. He looked closely at the blue bottle. When he shook it, he could hear something inside, but it did not sound like water. He pulled the cork form the bottle and looked inside. He found a white piece of paper that was tube shaped from being inside the bottle. Written on the paper was a letter from a boy named Joey who wanted a pen pal. Joey's letter asked whoever found the bottle to send him a letter. He gave his full name and address. There was even a stamp! Jeff was very excited about finding the letter. He could hardly wait to write Joey.

The next morning, Jeff started a letter. He began by giving Joey his name and age, and then he told him where he lived. Next he

wrote about how and where he found the blue bottle. Jeff added things he enjoyed doing, and he told Joey that his favorite hobby was beachcombing. He finished the letter by writing a funny joke he had heard at school.

It was almost a month before Jeff heard form his new pen pal. Upon opening the envelope, he could tell that Joey's letter was much longer than his own had been--almost three pages. In his letter Joey told Jeff about himself and the things he liked to do. As Jeff read the letter, he was already thinking of things he could write back, but on the last page Jeff read something that took him by surprise. He read that Joey had a disease that kept him indoors a lot.

Joey explained that his disease sometimes made it hard to breathe. He said that he had to go to the hospital often and that he had to take a lot of medicine. Joey also said that he loved to play outdoors but couldn't very often. His favorite hobbies were indoor things like reading, painting, and building models. Joey ended his letter the same way Jeff had. He wrote his favorite joke.

Jeff was confused after reading the letter. Even though Joey seemed happy, Jeff still felt sorry for him. He tried hard to imagine what it would be like to have a disease like Joey's. He wondered if Joey was in pain. He wondered how Joey could stand not being able to go outside whenever he wanted. He had a lot of questions. He decided to let his mother read the letter so they could talk about it.

After their talk, Jeff understood a little better about what Joey might be going through. Talking to his mother always seemed to help. She explained that even though Joey was different, he still could lead a very happy and full life. She also told Jeff that he should concentrate on the things Jeff <u>could</u> do and not on what he <u>couldn't</u> do. Jeff realized that Joey didn't want someone to feel sorry for him. He just wanted a pen pal.

Jeff's next letter was much longer than his first. He asked Joey a few questions about the disease and how it made him feel. Then he asked about Joey's artwork and the books he had read. Jeff went on and on knowing that the last part of the letter would be the hardest. He had to come up with a good joke.

Questions

1. Where did Jeff find the bottle?

2. Describe what Jeff found inside the bottle?

3. How were Jeff's hobbies different from Joey's?

* 4. How old do you think the boys in the story were? Why?

* 5. How do you think Joey wanted to be treated by Jeff?

6. What things did Jeff learn by talking to his mother?

* 7. How do you think people with diseases like Joey's want to be treated?

* 8. What might have happened if Jeff had written to Joey without first learning more about the disease?

* 9. How would you feel if someone in your family had a disease like Joey's?

* 10. How would you want to be treated if you had a disease like Joey's?

*Recommended for discussion

Fragile: Handle With Care

Karen McCoy
North Harrison Elementary

"Oh no! Another broken bone!" My mom and I have said those words a lot. My name is Jason. My mom and I have a disease that causes our bones to break very easily. The disease is called osteogenesis imperfecta. It's easier to just say brittle bones disease. Our bones break so easily that we cannot stand or walk without help. I use a walker to walk short distances, but most of the time I use a wheelchair.

I had a rough time when I started to school. I went to kindergarten only four days. On the fourth day, I fell out of my chair and broke my leg and my collar bone.

I had to go to the hospital for x-rays, traction and casts. X-rays are pictures that let the doctors see where bones are broken. Traction pulls broken bones into the right places to heal. Casts are hard plaster bandages that keep bones in the right places while they heal.

I couldn't go to school while my bones were healing. The casts were too big and heavy. A teacher came to my house for a few hours each week. She taught me the things that the other kids were learning, and she gave me papers to do.

When my bones were healed, the doctor took off the casts. My bones were weak from not being used. Before I had a chance to go back to school, I broke the same leg two more times. Each time, I had to go back to the hospital for more x-rays, traction, and casts. I was really getting tired of the whole thing.

On top of being in the hospital three times with broken bones, I had to go two times when I had pneumonia. I was there for Christmas and for my birthday. My family tried to make those days as nice for me as they could. The nurses and the aides did special things for me, too, but it just wasn't the same as being home.

I didn't get to go back to school at all that year. To make things even worse, when summer came I had to go to a special hospital for six weeks. My legs were very weak because I had been in bed so much. I had to learn how to walk with my walker all over again.

That hospital had special equipment and many kinds of therapists. They were people who taught me exercises to make my legs strong again. After six weeks I was much stronger. I could even take a few steps with my walker.

After I came home, we moved to a new town. It was almost time for school to start again. I was going to be in the first grade. The school in our new town had a class for children with handicaps. They could give me the help I needed to keep from breaking so many bones. If everything worked out, I might even get to have some classes with other first graders.

At first I was really nervous. After a few days, I started to have fun. I made a lot of friends in my special class and in first grade. I even had a special friend from first grade who helped me get around the building.

In the fall I went to the school's Fall Festival. It was great. I also got to dress up for the class Halloween party and decorate a jack-o-lantern.

In December my class took a field trip. I also went to my very first Christmas party. Boy, did it feel great to be home for Christmas!

I was home for my birthday, too. My mom gave me a surprise party, and some of my new friends came. I couldn't believe how good things were going.

In April we started getting ready for the Special Olympics field day. I couldn't wait. I was so careful not to get hurt. The big day finally came, and I couldn't believe my luck. I won an event and got my picture in the newspaper.

As the school year ended, everyone was shocked. I had gone to school ALL year without breaking a bone. I know that I won't always be that lucky. With my disease, I am probably going to break some more bones. But right now my main thought is, "Look out, Second Grade, here I come!"

Questions

1. What did Jason break easily?

2. What other member of Jason's family had the same disease?

* 3. Describe Jason's family.

4. How do you think Jason was like other kindergarten students?

* 5. How do you think Jason was like other first grade students?

6. What do you think Jason could do to keep from breaking so many bones?

7. Why do you think Jason broke so many bones in kindergarten but none in first grade?

8. Other children go to school with casts. Why couldn't Jason go to school with his casts?

* 9. What do you think would have happened if Jason would have gone to a regular first grade class with no special help?

* 10. How do you think Jason's mother felt when he broke a bone?

*Recommended for discussion

Dad's Job

Jan Cooke
Greenville Elementary

Have you ever had an x-ray? X-rays are pictures of your bones. If you haven't then you might be a little scared the first time you need one. My dad works in the x-ray department, and one day he showed me around.

Dad told me some patients come to the department in wheelchairs. Others come on special beds with wheels. It makes it easier to move patients who are too ill or hurt to sit in a chair.

An x-ray technologist (that's what they call people who work in the x-ray department) meets each patient. He introduces himself and asks the patient his name and some things about himself. That way, the patient begins to feel more at ease.

The patient is taken to an x-ray room. The technologist tells him that x-rays do not hurt. As he works, he explains each step so that the patient will understand what is happening.

An x-ray film is placed under the body part to be x-rayed. The technologist then goes to a control booth and tells the patient to hold very still. He comes right back and places another film under the patient and takes another x-ray from the control booth. The patient doesn't feel anything happening. That's just how painless x-rays are!

The x-ray films are developed while the patient waits a few minutes in the x-ray room. When the technologist brings the films back, he may ask the patient if he would like to see them. He sets the films on a view box. The light in this box makes the x-ray easier to see. The technologist may point out a few things, but a doctor must "read" the x-rays and decide if everything is all right or not.

Now the x-ray is ready for the doctor to see. He will decide what should be done for the patient.

Dad says he really likes his job. I guess that's because he gets to meet and help so many people. I'm glad he told me about his job. If I ever need an x-ray, I won't worry so much now. I hope you won't either!

Questions

1. What does an x-ray technologist do?

2. How is an x-ray different from a camera picture?

3. Why would someone having an x-ray need to "hold very still"?

4. If a technologist were showing the x-ray department to you, what questions might you ask him?

* 5. What would you say is the most important thing you know about x-rays now?

* 6. How might you feel if you needed an x-ray?

* 7. Why do you think the technologist took several x-rays?

* 8. How might a patient feel if the x-ray technologist wasn't friendly?

* 9. What might happen if you needed an x-ray but didn't get one?

* 10. Could a woman be an x-ray technologist? Why do you think so?

*Recommended for discussion

Our Summer Playhouse

Linda Hornung
Fairmont Elementary

I want to tell you about a girl named Sarah. I guess one could say she was an ordinary girl like you or me . . . except Sarah never grew up.

Like most kids, Sarah, several neighborhood friends, and I used to play dress-up. My playhouse was the perfect place for our occasional trips into fantasy land. All of us worked very hard at making this playhouse a special place. We painted the walls a pretty yellow, placed light lavender curtains at the windows, and painted the shutters light blue. Everyone loved this little playhouse. We played away most of our summers at the little house in my backyard. Sarah had purchased some flower seeds with money she earned selling lemonade. We planted them in a little flower box underneath the front window. Watering them every day was a chore each of us joyfully took turns doing, but sometimes we forgot. When the flowers would begin to droop like a sad puppy's ears, we would quickly remember and fetch the watering can.

Mom and all the neighbors donated lots of dress-up items for our fantasy adventures. We had hats, aprons, and even real makeup. It was a dream-come-true place for kids.

Pretending to be a baker was great fun with our chef's hat and play food. Sarah was always the customer at the restaurant ordering lots of good things to eat. Whenever it was my turn to be chef, Sarah would compliment me on my excellent cooking. It made me feel special.

On other days, Sarah would be the princess of a wonderful kingdom. She would wear a string of fake pearls around her neck. The best role, besides princess, was the royal knight. The princess would say, "Tell the townspeople to dress in their most beautiful clothes tonight. There will be a ball and a magnificent feast. We will dance all night, eat grand food from my father, and sit at the King's table."

"Of course, Your Princess. Anything you request," I responded dutifully as any royal knight would.

I always left immediately to shout the news to our kingdom. My return into the palace on one particular day was something that will be forever in my memory. I heard a cry. Then I realized the cry was coming from Sarah. I asked, "My dear Princess, what is the matter with thou?"

As Sarah responded, I realized that she was not playing a role. She was experiencing real pain. Her cry was a fearful one. "I'm so scared," she whimpered. "Everything looks like two, and I have a really bad headache. I want to go home. Please help me." In fact, this day marked the beginning of a courageous fight for my friend Sarah.

Mom told me the sad news several weeks later. Sarah had a brain tumor. The first operation to remove the growth was successful. The second was not. I went to the hospital to see Sarah every day. The purpose of my visits was to cheer her up, but it seemed my spirits were lower than hers.

On one of those visits, Sarah said to me, "Don't be sad. I'm going to be all right. We still are to have our feast, you know! The kingdom would be let down if we didn't have our magnificent ball."

Well, we had our ball right there in the hospital. Doctors, nurses, and friends came dressed as servants, kings, queens, and townspeople. Sarah was so surprised. We dressed her up right there in the hospital with makeup, pearls on her head . . . the works! She was extra happy to wear a new pair of earrings we bought for her. Although she had lost her hair because of the treatments, she said, "I look beautiful today, don't I?"

Sarah wore those earrings every day until she died. They brought her a strong feeling of being loved, of knowing that we cared for her, and of hope that someday she might get to go home and play in our little yellow playhouse.

I will miss her in that playhouse and in my house, too. You see, Sarah lived in that house, also. She was my beautiful sister.

Questions

1. What did Sarah like to do?
2. What kind of problem did Sarah have?
* 3. What is a brain tumor?
4. How was Sarah like most kids?
* 5. If you could speak to Sarah, what questions would you ask her?
6. How did doctors try to cure Sarah?
* 7. What could have happened if Sarah's surgery had been successful?
* 8. How would you feel if you found out that you or your best friend had a brain tumor?
* 9. What is the best way for you to act around people who are seriously ill?
*10. What did you like best about Sarah and her family?

*Recommended for discussion

Playing Around

Patricia Abell
Glasscock Elementary

Tim was bored. He had already ridden his bike, teased his dog, and played tag with Jerry. He wanted something new to do, something different.

Tim's mom was in the kitchen cooking dinner. She told him to go to his room.

"Tim, you have hundreds of toys to play with. Go through your closet. You will find something," said his mother impatiently.

Tim lugged his way to his bedroom. He opened the door to his closet. "There is nothing to do around here," he said to himself.

He started going through the pile of toys in the bottom of his closet. He spotted his bow and decided to do some target shooting. He was looking for his arrows when Jerry came bouncing in. Tim looked up for a second then continued looking for his arrows.

"Hi, Tim. What's up?" asked Jerry.

"Oh, nothing. I'm looking for my arrows. Want to do some target shooting?" Tim asked.

"Well, I guess. But you're only playing."

"I know," said Tim, "but Dad told me he would let me shoot real arrows when I got a little older."

"That's great," said Jerry, "but I would rather shoot a gun."

"My dad only has bows and arrows. He said they are more exciting than guns," replied Tim. "Do you want to see his collection? It's really neat!"

"Sure!"

Tim took Jerry to the den. His father had a shelf filled with bows of all sizes. Inside a locked, glass case stood about twenty arrows.

"Why are the arrows locked up?" asked Jerry.

Tim replied, "Because they are very sharp, and Dad says I can't play with them. They are not toys. He keeps them locked up all the time."

"Well, these are neat, but have you ever seen a shotgun or a pistol? My dad has both. Come on. I'll show you."

Tim told his mom he'd be back in time for supper. Tim and Jerry raced to Jerry's house. No one was home. Jerry unlocked the door and took Tim into his parent's bedroom. Jerry opened the table drawer and brought out a little gun.

"This is my father's pistol. My dad keeps it here for protection. Do you want to hold it?"

Tim backed away and said, "No, I don't think so."

"Why?" asked Jerry. "It won't hurt you. See, it's not even loaded." As Jerry said this, he pulled the trigger. The gun was aimed at Tim, and when it fired, it hit Tim in the stomach.

Suddenly Tim started screaming. All he could do was yell. The pain in his stomach was horrible. Jerry was shocked. He did not know the gun was loaded. He dropped the gun and ran over to Tim. Tim was bleeding a lot. The blood had already soaked the front of his shirt.

Jerry ran to the phone and dialed *911* . The woman on the other end took his address and told him to stay on the phone. She told him to tell Tim to lie down.

Before too long an ambulance and the police arrived. They took both Jerry and Tim to the hospital. Their parents were waiting for them when they got there.

Tim had to stay in the hospital for several weeks. Because of Jerry's fast thinking and calling *911* for help, Tim is all right and will be starting school again soon.

Jerry learned his lesson the hard way about playing with guns. Tim and Jerry are still friends. They have made a promise to never play with guns again.

Questions

1. In the beginning what was Tim's problem?

2. What did Tim need to do to solve his problem?

* 3. Where could Jerry have gone for help if he had not known about calling *911* ?

* 4. Now that Jerry and Tim know about the dangers of playing with guns, what should be done about the guns in Jerry's home?

* 5. How were the sharp arrows and loaded guns alike and different?

6. Why did the gun accident happen?

* 7. What could have happened if Tim's father had not locked up the arrows?

* 8. If Jerry had not thought quickly and dialed *911* for help, what might have happened?

9. How would you feel if you were Jerry?

* 10. What would you have done if you had been Jerry and had accidentally shot your best friend?

*Recommended for discussion

A Date To Remember

O. Geraldine Mize
Mt. Vernon, Kentucky

June 29th is the most important day of the year, for me that is. On that date I was born, Grandfather died, and Uncle Tim came to live with us. Of course, all of these events were in different years. I was born June 29, 1977, and every year since, that day has been my Special Day.

When I was ten years old, my special day was shadowed with sadness. My favorite grandfather died on the baseball field from a massive heart attack while coaching the Blue Bird Little League team. I thought my day would never be special again. I would recall the sadness and my longing for "Pap Paw."

Grandmother must have sensed my feeling because when she put her arm around me, she said, "What a beautiful day for Pap Paw to go. This morning, like every June 29th for the last nine years, he told me that it was a great day today. Then he'd ask me if I knew why it was a great day. When I'd say no, he would say, ' This is the day my princess was born. It's the best day of the year. My boys are playing the Mt. Pleasant Eagles today, and after the game we'll go to Princess' birthday party. I can't wait to hear that squeal when she opens her present, gives me a hug, and says how much she loves me!' He thought that you and your brother Jeremy really made life worth living."

On June 29, 1989, I was twelve years old. This was to be my most memorable Special Day. I had my first, night-time, grown-up party with boys and girls. Mom decorated the patio with pink and lavender balloon bouquets and mini-streamers with twinkling white lights. The lights were actually Christmas lights that gave the appearance of bright shiny stars amidst the balloons and streamers.

My Dad's mother lives in Dallas, Texas. She had mailed my birthday gift which arrived two days early and made my day absolutely perfect! She sent me the most yummy outfit. It was just what I needed for my party. She sent a lavender leather mini-skirt with a pink shell top that was appliqued with lavender hibiscus and

outlined with pink sequins. She also sent some pink pantyhose and lavender, Pappagallo shoes that were real leather! Grandma says lavender makes my eyes look like violets. Mom said I could wear a little make-up--nothing heavy--just a little eyeshadow and some lipstick. This was going to be the best birthday ever!

Oh, it was some party! My best friend, Amy, gave me a Guns and Roses tape. Everyone that I had invited was there. Mostly it was my seventh grade friends along with three ninth grade boys and a few eighth graders. Cindy Lewis had asked me to invite the ninth grader, Jimmy Bowling, because she liked him. Jimmy brought a joint with him, and he and Cindy asked me to take a drag. It made me feel light-headed and caused me to sneeze. My allergies made me cough and sneeze, so I didn't think I needed to aggravate the allergies with pot. From now on, I would just say," No!" I thought I should probably tell Mom and Dad about the pot. I knew they would be angry with Jimmy.

After the party, my parents entered my room. Dad said, "Jenny, Mom and I need to talk to you." I nearly jumped out of my skin. I was sure they knew about Jimmy's joint. They sat down on my bed, and Dad started, "Jenny, your Uncle Tim is coming to live with us."

"Uncle Tim and Sherry and Jenna!" I exclaimed.

Dad shook his head. "Just Tim. He and Sherry have divorced. Tim is very sick, Honey. He needs us. We'll give him lots of love and make him well again."

My dad's brother, Tim, had lived in Little Rock, Arkansas, ever since I could remember. We visited with him about every two years on our way to Dallas to see Grandma. Uncle Tim had come to visit us three times that I could remember. Each time he came, he had a new wife. Sherry was wife number three. Jenna was her daughter. Jenna was my age, and we had a lot in common, so I really liked her.

Uncle Tim and his second wife had a baby boy who was now eight years old. The baby was born blind and deaf. He was later diagnosed as having cerebral palsy which Mom says is a type of paralysis. He never cried nor made a sound of any kind nor turned or moved his body. Mom said it was because Uncle Tim and Aunt Mindy didn't take care of their own health before he was born.

Uncle Tim arrived June 29, 1989, at 11:00 p. m. He looked terrible! He was so very thin. His large, popped, empty eyes appeared to be detached from his face. He wiped his nose and sniffed a lot. I thought he had allergies, too. For the next two

weeks, Uncle Tim stayed in his room and slept most of the day. When he finally came out of his room, he was fun to be with. He told Jeremy and me about his adventures. He had worked as a stuntman for CBS's Fox Studio in California. Jeremy and I gave Uncle Tim lots of hugs. Dad had said, "We need to give Tim lots of love and make him well." Jeremy and I were trying to do our part.

Mom and Dad talked to Uncle Tim about going to a hospital, but he would always say, "No, I don't need help. I can manage my own life." Two months ago, Mom walked into Tim's room and found him sniffing cocaine. That was it!

Mom told him, " We are all you have, and we love you. But you must either get help and get well or you will have to leave our house."

Uncle Tim agreed to get treatment. We went to the hospital to visit him last Sunday. He was doing very well, but he was still quite shaky. His eyes looked less empty, and he had more color in his face.

As we were driving home from the hospital, Mom and Dad told Jeremy and me that they had been stupid as teenagers. They had smoked marijuana with Uncle Tim. When they married they wanted to have children, but they had heard that drugs could affect an unborn child. They decided to leave off the pot, and for five years they waited until I came along. Dad said, "I hope you will never feel the need to experiment with any kind of drugs."

I already knew that I didn't want anything that affected my thinking. After seeing Uncle Tim, I knew from now on it would be easy for me to just say, " No!"

Questions

1. Where could someone who has a drug problem go for help?
2. How did smoking pot make Jenny feel?
3. What probably caused Uncle Tim's baby to be blind and deaf?
* 4. What would you do if a friend offered you drugs?
* 5. What could have happened if Jenny's parents had continued to take drugs?
* 6. Was it a good idea for Jenny's parents to tell about their smoking pot? Why?
* 7. Why do you think Uncle Tim married and divorced three times?
* 8. If Jenny had told her parents about smoking pot, what might they have done?
* 9. Do you think Jenny's mother was right to insist that Uncle Tim get treatment or leave their house? Why?
* 10. What made Jenny's twelfth birthday so memorable?

*Recommended for discussion

WHAT HAPPENED TO SUSAN

Susan Watkins
Indiana University Southeast

Many years ago there was a little girl named Susan. Susan was an energetic four-year-old with curly, blonde hair. She lived in a red-brick house with her mother, father, and eight-year-old brother, Steven.

One day Steven developed a headache. He went to his mother for help. Mother told Steven, "The aspirin is in the cabinet above the sink. Take one aspirin. Be sure to put the bottle back into the cabinet." Steven went into the kitchen and got the aspirin out of the cabinet. He opened the bottle and took one aspirin. He set the bottle on the counter then reached for a glass of water. After swallowing the aspirin, Steven left the kitchen and went into his room.

Meanwhile, Susan had decided to play "tea party." She set her dishes out onto her toy table. She poured the imaginary tea and passed the imaginary cakes. To her surprise she was short a few cakes. Where could she get more cakes? In the kitchen, of course!

When Susan arrived in the kitchen, she spotted the bottle of aspirin. These little "cakes" would go with the delicious tea for her guests. She placed the aspirin on a toy plate and took them back to her room. She gave each imaginary guest an aspirin and began to eat the rest herself.

About fifteen minutes later, Mother turned to Steven and said, "Susan is too quiet. I had better go check on her."

Mother went to Susan's room and opened the door. She was shocked when she saw Susan eating aspirin. She immediately rushed to the phone. Mother called the emergency room to ask what she should do.

"Bring her immediately to the emergency room," said the man at the hospital.

Mother put both Steven and Susan into the car and then ran outside to get Father.

"Father, hurry! We have to rush Susan to the hospital," shouted Mother. Father ran to the car and quickly drove the family to the hospital.

At the hospital Mother, Father, and brother Steven stood by as the doctor worked hard to save Susan. The doctor tried to push a big long tube down Susan's throat. He had to pump the aspirin out of her stomach very quickly. Susan did not like this at all! She put her hands in front of her mouth to keep the tube from going in. The doctor asked a nurse to help, but Susan fought hard to escape. The doctor asked Mother and Father to help the nurse hold Susan down.

Finally, it was over. The doctor told Mother and Father that Susan was lucky that she had eaten so much food for lunch. The large amount of food helped to keep the small amount of aspirin from making Susan very sick.

Questions

1. What do you think could have happened if Susan had not eaten a large amount of food?

2. What do you think could have happened if Susan had eaten a larger amount of aspirin?

3. Why did Susan eat the aspirin?

* 4. What do you think it is like to have your stomach pumped?

* 5. What is meant by "Susan was lucky"?

* 6. What do you know about the effects aspirin has on a person when he takes too many?

* 7. Why did the doctor have to work quickly?

* 8. What do you think will happen after Mother, Father, and Steven bring Susan home from the hospital?

* 9. How would you feel if you were Steven, and you caused your little sister to get sick?

* 10. What would you do if you were Mother and found that Steven was not responsible enough to listen to instructions?

* Recommended for discussion

WICKED TALES FROM SYDNEY THE SQUIRREL

Tracy Thomason
Eastern Kentucky University

"No! No! I don't want to see Sicily. I'm not sick any more. I will get better," cried Sydney the Squirrel. "Please don't bring Sicily the Snake to our home, Ma and Pa."

Sydney Squirrel lived deep in the forest of Windy Woods. He lived in a very old sycamore tree down by the sparkling water of the Silverbrook Stream. Sydney lived with his ma and pa who were respected members of the Windy Woods Animal Community. Pa Squirrel worked for Benny Beaver at Beaver Lumber Company, and Ma Squirrel tended to the community nut project that helped to feed animals in need during the winter months. It had been a good summer for Sydney. He got to help his father at the lumber company this year. Sydney spent many days playing with his friends Rodney Rabbit and Milly Mole. Sometimes they would all sneak out in the evening and play until the wee hours of dawn with their friend Alfredo the Owl. Giggling and frolicking, Sydney would scamper home to his plush bed of sycamore leaves.

One day after helping Pa Squirrel at the lumber yard, Sydney and Milly Mole decided to go to the dark side of the woods to munch on some acorns. Ma and Pa Squirrel forbade Sydney to go to the dark side because many animals in Windy Woods believed that it was a very evil place. In spite of what Ma and Pa told Sydney, he decided that he would go to the dark side. The biggest acorn tree in Windy Woods grew in the dark side, and the warnings only tempted Sydney and Milly to creep into the dark side and gather all the acorns that they could find. Sydney was stuffing the last acorn into his pocket when he noticed the biggest acorn he had ever seen. This acorn was huge. It was bigger than Sydney.

Both Milly and Sydney were so shocked by the size of the acorn that they decided to take it home. With acorns bulging from their pockets, Sydney and Milly rolled the enormous acorn all the way home. As soon as they got home, Milly heard his mother calling him,

so off he scurried. But Sydney, on the other hand, stayed behind with the acorn. He rolled it under an oak tree and studied the overgrown nut.

After a few moments, Sydney became tempted by the acorn and cracked it open. Sydney gobbled the whole thing before he heard his mother call for him. Sydney quickly fled home.

Sydney fell asleep. He later awoke with a horrible pain in his belly. The pain was so bad that he screamed for his ma and pa. Ma and Pa Squirrel rushed to Sydney to see what was wrong. He was burning up with a raging fever. Ma and Pa were so concerned that they told Sydney that they were going to send Alfredo the Owl to the dark side to find Sicily the Snake. Sicily was the only one in Windy Woods that could help Sidney.

"Oh, Ma, please don't bring Sicily here. Every animal in Windy Woods is afraid of Sicily and his deadly sleeper bite," screamed Sydney. "I promise that I will get better."

At first, Ma and Pa were a little uneasy about asking for Sicily's help. It was true that Sicily was a little strange, not to mention the fact that he was a snake. But as the night grew longer, Sydney's fever grew worse. Ma and Pa Squirrel had no other choice but to send for Sicily.

"Sydney, we have to send for Sicily. Your fever is growing worse, and we have no other choice," cried Ma.

"But, Ma!" cried Sydney.

"Son, Sicily can help you feel better," insisted Pa.

Pa Squirrel sent for Sicily, and in about an hour there was a rap at the door. Pa Squirrel slowly opened the door. Sicily slithered in.

"You s-s-s-sent for me?" hissed Sicily.

"Oh, thank you for coming, Sicily. My son is very sick, and I don't know what could be wrong," cried Pa.

"May I s-s-s-see him?" hissed the snake.

Sicily slithered into the room where Sydney lay sleeping. Sydney quickly awoke when Sicily slammed the door behind him.

Tell me, young S-S-S-Sydney, what were you doing at the dark s-s-s-side today? A tasty s-s-s-squirrel like you s-s-s-should not enter the dark s-s-s-side," said Sicily.

"Oh, please, Sicily, spare my life. I didn't mean any harm. I only wanted an acorn," cried Sydney. "I promise that I won't go again, not even for another giant acorn."

"A giant acorn?" questioned Sicily.

"Yes, I found an acorn that was bigger than I am, and I ate the whole thing. I promise that I won't do it again," cried Sydney.

"S-s-s-so, I s-s-s-see, my dear S-S-S-Sydney. S-s-s-see that you never return to the dark s-s-s-side again," hissed Sicily.

Sicily then drew back his hooded head and lunged at Sydney as if to sink his pointy fangs into Sydney's flesh. Fear overtook Sydney as he lost all consciousness.

"Sydney, Sweetheart, wake up," whispered Ma. "For heaven's sake, are you all right?"

"Ma, he bit me! The big snake bit me! The sleeper bite . . . Sicily bit me!" cried Sydney.

"Nonsense, Son," insisted Pa. "Sicily fed you some crackleberry juice to help your fever. He said you must have eaten a bad acorn."

"But, Ma, it all seemed so real," said Sydney.

"It must have been a terrible nightmare," said Pa. "Now try to get some rest, Son."

"All right, I'll try," said Sydney.

Confused by the excitement, Sydney decided that it was all a bad dream. He smiled to himself as he thought about the crazy dream. But as he rolled over, he felt something stick him. To Sydney's surprise, he turned around, and there in his leafy pillow lay a pair of piercing fangs.

It would be a long time before Sydney would eat another acorn, but it would be an even longer time before he would enter the dark side.

Questions

1. Where did Sydney and Milly go to find acorns?
2. What happened after Sydney ate the big acorn?
3. What could have caused Sydney to get sick?
* 4. What do you think Sydney learned from the whole experience?
5. How do you think Ma and Pa Squirrel felt about asking Sicily their house?
6. What do you suppose Sydney will do if he decides he wants another acorn?
* 7. How do you think Sydney would have reacted if Sicily had been a rabbit instead of a snake?
* 8. Do you think Sydney would have returned to the dark side if he had not gotten sick? Why?
* 9. How do you feel when you disobey your parents?
* 10. What is the lesson this story is teaching you?

*Recommended for discussion

Cory and his Guitar

Marcia Lamb
North Harrison Elementary

It was a beautiful summer Sunday afternoon and a perfect day for Cory to perform in front of a group of his admiring fans. Cory had always dreamed of being a rock star, and today his dream would come true. Cory had so much going for him--good looks, a great voice, and the most expensive Smurf guitar that money could buy. He was dressed in his leather jacket and stonewashed jeans. His "shades" covered his brown, twinkling eyes. He was ready; his band was ready, and this was his BIG chance. There was no stopping him now!

Cory began to play for a room filled with his cheering fans. There must have been thousands! As the people screamed and clapped, Cory sang with more feeling. He began to dance. The crowd cheered, and Cory danced harder and jumped into the air! But suddenly . . . *CRASH* ! Cory's dreams of stardom came tumbling down with him to the floor.

Cory awoke to find himself on his bedroom floor with his Smurf guitar at his side. His head hurt! Something warm and red was flowing down his face. The stage that he had been performing on had been his own bed. He had bounced off it and landed head first on the sharp end of his Smurf guitar.

Cory picked himself up and ran crying to the kitchen where his mother was washing the dishes. She took one look at him and ran to the telephone to call his doctor. Cory had not said a word, but the sight of him was enough. His face was covered with blood. At that time his mother was more scared than he was. She didn't know that head wounds bleed faster and much more than some other wounds. Sometimes they look much worse than they really are.

His mother should not have been scared. Being frightened did not help Cory. It only made her unable to think clearly and do what she needed to do. The best thing to do in an emergency is to be calm, take deep breaths, and try to remember first aid for the person who is hurt.

As Cory's mom drove to the hospital emergency room, his grandmother held him in her lap with a washcloth pressed on his wound to stop the bleeding. When they arrived at the hospital, the doctors and nurses took charge. They talked to Cory and made many of his fears go away. They asked him what had happened. Can you imagine what they thought when he told them the story? This was the first time they had ever met a rock star who had fallen on the end of his guitar.

The doctors took X-rays or pictures of the inside of Cory's head. They needed to see if the inside was hurt like the outside. They found that the inside parts were all right. But the outside would have to be fixed. Cory would have to have stitches put in his head.

Again, Cory got the chance to pretend. Only this time the doctor played along with him. The doctor told him to pretend that he was being strapped into a spaceship. The doctor was really putting Cory in a jacket with no arms so that he could not get his hands and arms in the way. The doctor told him to pretend that he was "blasting off" when he was stitching Cory's head. Cory was not afraid. This guy told neat stories about space.

In no time at all the doctor was finished, and the spaceship came back to earth. Cory had five stitches in his head when it landed. The doctor gave him a sucker and a coupon for a free meal at Hardee's for being such a good passenger--I mean patient.

Back home that evening, Cory had a headache. He and his mother talked about how dreaming can sometimes get out of control. Cory realized that he had pretended too hard without thinking what could happen. He promised that from then on he would only play his Smurf guitar on the ground and only for his own family. He said, "Mom, I'll never Smurf around with my Smurf guitar again."

Questions

1. What kind of boy do you think Cory was?
2. What was Cory's dream?
3. What do you think it is like to get stitches?
4. How are you and Cory alike?
5. If you had been Cory's mother that afternoon, what would you have done differently?
6. Why did the doctor tell Cory stories about space?
7. What was Cory thinking about when he got hurt?
* 8. What should Cory have been thinking about instead?
* 9. What could have happened to Cory that would have been worse?
*10. What do you think Cory and his mom discussed on the way home from the hospital?

* Recommended for discussion

Mondays

Deanna Smith Hunt
Parkwood Elementary

Have you ever had one of those awful days? It's raining! I forgot my lunch money! Mom wouldn't let me wear my new tennis shoes! My best friend, Chris, was absent. School was boring. I had extra homework to do. My soccer game got rained out. I have to take out the garbage. My bedroom looks like a tornado just touched down. And it's Monday!

It's Monday, so I should have expected it to happen again. My name is Travis. I live with my mom, Patti, my stepdad, Bob, and my half-sister/half-monster, Ashley. Ashley is four years old, and she's a real pest! She is always asking me weird questions and following me around the apartment. My mom and Bob think she's real cute, but I think she's a real pain!

Why do I hate Mondays? It's because Saturdays and Sundays happen to come in between Friday and Monday. You see, my real dad is supposed to visit with me on the weekends because of the divorce. But he doesn't call me much any more. Sometimes he does call, but he usually forgets all the plans we make. It really makes me feel bad. Sometimes I even feel angry with my father for forgetting me. I hate Mondays because all the other kids with "weekend dads" tell their stories about all the neat things they did together. It's hard to just sit there and listen. I guess I also feel a little bit jealous because they spend time with their real fathers. It makes me feel like I'm invisible. It's like I have "MY DAD FORGOT ABOUT ME AGAIN" printed in big letters on the front of my sweatshirt.

My mom and I talk about it a lot, especially on Mondays. Mom understands how disappointed I feel about my dad. She's been disappointed by him, too. My stepdad even tries to keep me busy so I'll not think about being forgotten. Ashley doesn't understand any of this. She sees her real dad everyday. She calls my real dad, "HIM" instead of Jim. Anyway, *Jim* and *him* do rhyme.

I also talk to this special lady named Susan about my problems with Dad. Susan is helping me understand that it's not my fault my real dad does things that hurt my feelings. Susan is a counselor and has her own office in a huge building downtown. She always listens to me and tries to help me. Susan is younger than my mom, but she's really smart. She has been helping me understand this thing called alcoholism.

Alcoholism is when people can't control their drinking and can't control what they do once they start drinking. People who have this are called alcoholics and have lots of problems.

My dad drinks beer and other stuff. He's been in the hospital a couple of times and even spent the night in jail once for drunken driving. My mom says his drinking problem is why she divorced him. But Dad can be really nice when he's not drinking. I know he loves me. He has told me that, and I love him even if he does drink too much alcohol.

Susan helps me understand why he forgets me and why it's not my fault. I wish sometimes that Susan and I could help my dad. Susan says my dad has to help himself first and really want to change before he can get better. I hope he gets help soon. I just wish he'd act like a real father on the weekends like he's supposed to do. Sometimes I write letters to remind him.

Susan is always telling me to remember that no matter what people say or do to me, I'm still a great person. I'm really lucky that my mom takes me to see Susan. Susan is helping me learn not to hate Mondays.

QUESTIONS

1. What is alcoholism?
2. What kind of problem did Travis have?
3. What did Travis think about his sister?
4. How is Susan helping Travis?
* 5. How is Travis different from or like you?
* 6. What would you ask Travis if you could talk to him?
* 7. Why does Travis seem to hate Mondays?
* 8. If Travis' father didn't drink alcohol, what might have happened after the divorce?
* 9. If Travis continues go to counseling with Susan, what do you think will happen?
* 10. How do you think you would feel about weekends if you were Travis or his real father?

*Recommended for discussion